DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 280 262 FL 016 109

AUTHOR Shimatani, Hiroshi
TITLE The Use of Small Group Work in the ESL/EFL Classroom: Theoretical Basis and Some Suggestions for Practical Application.
PUB DATE [86]
NOTE 28p.; Part of a master's thesis, Michigan State University.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Information Analyses (070) -- Dissertations/Theses - Master Theses (042)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Class Organization; Classroom Techniques; *Educational Theories; *English (Second Language); Feedback; Females; *Group Dynamics; *Group Membership; *Learning Theories; Males; Program Effectiveness; Second Language Instruction; Second Language Learning; *Small Group Instruction; Student Role; Teacher Role

ABSTRACT

In English as a second language/English as a foreign language classrooms where teacher-fronted instruction is still the norm, small group work tends to be avoided because conversational activities among nonnative speakers are generally thought to be of little use. The validity of small-group work among nonnative speakers is defended with both pedagogical claims and recent second language acquisition theories and research findings obtained inside and outside the classroom. In addition, variables that affect successful small group performance are discussed in these contexts: (1) the role of the teacher, (2) the role of the leaders, (3) the formation of groups, and (4) the sex composition of groups. Also, an ideal organization of small group work is suggested. Finally, the ways in which currently available techniques can be incorporated into the traditional classroom are demonstrated. (Author/MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED280262

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

H. Shimatani

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

THE USE OF SMALL GROUP WORK IN THE ESL/EFL CLASSROOM: THEORETICAL BASIS AND SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR PRACTICAL APPLICATION

By

Hiroshi Shimatani

Michigan State University

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Paul Munsell and Dr. Kenji Kitao for their helpful comments and criticisms on earlier drafts of this manuscript.

FL016109

ABSTRACT

THE USE OF SMALL GROUP WORK IN THE ESL/EFL CLASSROOM:
THEORETICAL BASIS AND SOME SUGGESTIONS
FOR PRACTICAL APPLICATION

By

Hiroshi Shimatani

In ESL/EFL classrooms where teacher-fronted instruction is still the norm, small group work tends to be avoided probably because conversational activities among non-native speakers are generally thought to be of little use. This paper, first, tries to identify and defend the validity of small group work among non-native speakers not only with pedagogical claims but also with recent second language acquisition theories and research findings obtained inside and outside of the classroom. Second, the paper discusses variables which affect successful small group performance: 1) the role of the teacher, 2) the role of the leaders, 3) the formation of groups, and 4) the sex composition of groups. Third, it suggests an ideal organization of small group work. Finally, how currently available techniques can be incorporated into the traditional lockstep classroom is demonstrated.

Introduction

The use of group work in the second language (L2) classroom has long been recommended. Although its effectiveness has been acknowledged by many educators, language teachers - especially in EFL situations - often avoid small group activities for fear that inaccurate production of the target language may allow acquisition of faulty language.

Recent language acquisition theories insist on the importance of more active participation in small group interactions to promote communicative competence. For example, the research findings on language use in the L2 classroom studies that were reported by Gass and Varonis (1985) show that the negotiation in small groups helps promote L2 acquisition both by means of comprehensible input as proposed by Krashen (1982) and also by comprehensible output as hypothesized by Swain (1985). Overall, small group activities seem supported not only by pedagogical arguments but also by L2 acquisition research data.

This paper reviews recent accomplishments in language acquisition research and defends the validity of small group work as an important requirement for development of L2 proficiency. Further, it explores the organization of small groups in order to find how best to incorporate small group activities into ESL/EFL classrooms effectively.

Pedagogical Claims on Small Group Work in the L2 Classroom

The effectiveness of small group work has been emphasized mainly for pedagogical reasons. Long and Porter (1985) summarize five advantages of small group work over the lockstep instructions in which only the teacher sets the instructional pace and content for all the students.

First, language practice opportunities are enhanced because each student can receive more speaking opportunities. By allowing some students to talk in several small groups, the talking time for each student is greatly increased (Long 1975). As Seliger (1977) suggests, speaking opportunities are important predictors of L2 acquisition.

Second, the quality of student talk is improved. According to Barnes cited in Long (1975), in the friendly setting of a small group, students are allowed to pause, hesitate, repeat, stumble over new words or change directions in cohesive and coherent sequences of utterances. This type of practice can be found in the speech of children.

Third, small group activities can promote individually appropriate instruction. In the lockstep classroom, individual students' learning styles cannot be considered. As Rivers (1983) suggests, students do not learn at the same rates or use the same strategies for understanding and retaining the material to be learned. Dunn (1983) argues that when individual characteristics are matched with complementary resources and surroundings, higher

academic achievement can be expected. As Long and Porter (1985) suggest, no language proficiency test can clearly show differences among students in specific language abilities. Therefore, responding to individual learning styles in small groups may enable each student to receive individualized instruction.

Fourth, group work can lower filters which hinder language acquisition. In teacher-fronted instruction some students feel inhibited when they are required to respond in a short, polished sentence because of the "audience effect" of the large class (Long 1975). Stevick (1976) suggests that this situation decreases learning because the learners protect themselves from the possibility of being exposed or embarrassed. A small group of peers can provides a relatively non-threatening situation.

Fifth and finally, group work can motivate learners. Littlejohn (1982), for example, reports that small-group, independent study can motivate students who are learning beginning Spanish. He asserts that the learners feel free to talk, to make errors, and to contribute their own experiences in unsupervised small groups when they work in cooperation rather than in competition.

The small group work discussed above clearly points out the defects of the large group lockstep designs which are still the norm in many L2 classrooms. Lockstep instruction tends to neglect individual differences such as age, aptitude, sex, motivation, interests and learning styles (Long 1976, Long 1977). Furthermore, in the lockstep system, only the teacher decides who

speaks. Since equal rights of communication tend to be neglected, there is little two-way exchange of information between teacher and students in the teacher-fronted classroom (Long 1983).

Theoretical Basis of Small Group Work for L2 Acquisition

Although pedagogical arguments supporting the effectiveness of small group activities sound good, they are not strong enough by themselves to persuade L2 teachers to use small-group activities. Very few teachers try to introduce group work into the language class probably because many teachers worry that spontaneous production of the target language may bring about inaccurate language forms and inappropriate language use. As Saville-Troike et al (1984) report, the results of the observation of L2 children's communicative tactics show that some of the successful communicators have fossilized at relatively early levels of development. They argue that the initial success in communication may have reduced the motivation to learn more complex linguistic forms.

The caution against communicative activities presented by Saville-Troike et al (1984) is very important when we incorporate group work into the existing program. The heavy dependance upon small group work at the early stage of development may be dangerous. The L2 teacher needs to provide feedback in order to prevent fossilization. Yet the validity of group work is not

undermined. Perspectives from the recent language acquisition theories provide us theoretical basis for small group work.

The input hypothesis proposed by Krashen (1982) has emphasized the discourse analysis of the interactions between native speakers and non-native speakers inside and outside of the classroom. This input hypothesis posits that language acquisition takes place when the learner receives "comprehensible input" which is a little beyond the learner's stage of development. Krashen argues that exposure to the comprehensible input, which focuses on the meaning rather than on the form, leads to language acquisition with help from context, knowledge of the world, or extralinguistic information. Finally, Krashen claims that the production of the target language will emerge over time if L2 learners get enough intake from comprehensible input.

The input hypothesis has the following flaws: First, the process from input to intake is unclear. Swain (1985) reports that students observed in immersion programs have not acquired the target language even after using comprehensible input for seven years. VanPatten (1984b) suggests that L2 learners will not acquire form if they are putting all their attention on meaning. Second, the nature of the comprehensible input is not well explained. Krashen (1982) states that the comprehensible input is roughly tuned to the learner's current level of development. He regards teacher talk in the L2 classroom as a source of comprehensible input because it appears to be very similar to caretaker speech which is characterized as having a

"here and now" orientation. However, the work of the caretaker is in contrast with that of the teacher. Long (1976) cites Ervin-Tripp's report and indicates that the teacher attends to the grammatical errors but not to the truth value in students' responses.

Long (1983) examines the precise nature of teacher talk by comparing the teacher-student interactions in the L2 classroom with the interactions between native speakers and non-native speakers outside the classroom. He finds that there are many display questions but only a few referential questions in the teachers' discourse. Display questions refer to known information questions (classroom questions) such as "Are you a student?". Referential questions refer to unknown information questions (real questions) such as "What's the matter?". That is, Long (1983) points out that L2 learners are just asked to show knowledge that the teacher already has and rarely have an opportunity to tell the teacher something unknown to him or her.

Long (1983) asserts that teacher talk is comprehensible largely because it contains few linguistic surprises. In other words, teacher talk is not sufficient comprehensible input in and of itself and Krashen's (1982) language production model - depending on the teacher's simplified speech as input - needs to be reconsidered. Further Long (1983) argues that for genuine communication which fosters language acquisition there must be a two-way exchange of information in the language classroom.

According to Long's (1983) model of language acquisition, tasks involving two-way exchange of informaton give less

competent speakers opportunities to present feedback on their lack of comprehension of the input. The essential point of this model is that L2 acquisition is fostered with the comprehensible input and the productive use of language termed by Swain (1985) as "comprehensible output" through the negotiation for meaning and this occurs more frequently in small groups.

Research Findings Showing the Effectiveness of Small Group Work

Many researchers agree that L2 learners should be put in a position where they can negotiate the new input which is modified to the level of comprehensibility that they can manage (Scarcella and Higa 1981; Long and Porter 1985; Pica and Doughty 1985; Varonis and Gass 1985a). Scarcella and Higa (1981) report that adults can receive more challenging input than children because adults are more involved in keeping the conversation going by the work of negotiation. It becomes essential to confirm whether non-native speakers in small groups can perform the work of negotiation for meaning. The following are the results of the recent studies relevant to the discussions in this paper.

The Amount of Student Talk

The amount of student talk is greater in the small group activities than in the teacher-fronted instructions (Long et al 1976; Pica and Doughty 1985). The L2 learners talk more frequently with other L2 learners than with native speakers (Porter 1983, reported in Long and Porter 1985).

The Accuracy of Student Talk

The level of accuracy of the production of the target language by the L2 learners shows no significant differences whether the L2 learner converses with a native speaker or a non-native speaker (Porter 1983, cited in Long and Porter 1985). The utterances produced by the L2 learners are equally ungrammatical both in the small groups and in the lock step instructions (Pica and Doughty 1985).

The Other-Corrections and Miscorrections

The completions and other-corrections carried out by the L2 learners are more frequent in the small group activities than in the teacher-led discussions (Pica and Doughty 1985). The frequency of other-corrections by the L2 learners is not significantly different from that by native speakers because it is very low in both contexts (Porter 1983, cited in Long and Porter 1985). In Porter's study, the L2 learners corrected 1.5 percent and native speakers corrected 8 percent of their partner's grammatical and lexical errors. Further, Porter's study implies that the miscorrections provided by the L2 learners are not serious problems at least among the intermediate and advanced students because they miscorrected only .3 percent of their partner's mistakes. Varonis and Gass (1985a) suggest that the frequency of the other-corrections among the L2 learners depends on the familiarity. If the learners know each other well, the corrections are not regarded as threatening. Further, Varonis and Gass report that the L2 learners appear to receive more corrections from other learners than from native speakers.

The Negotiation among the Students

Varonis and Gass (1985b) indicate that negotiations of meaning are more frequent in dyads consisting of non-native speakers than in dyads including native speakers. This is because non-native speakers need to negotiate the meaning so often to understand their partner's utterances that are unintelligible or marginally interpretable (Varonis and Gass 1985a, 1985b). The L2 learners appear to negotiate more with learners who are at a different level of second language proficiency (Porter 1983, reported in Long and Porter 1985) and with learners who are from different first language backgrounds (Varonis and Gass 1985b). Pica and Doughty (1985) state that a number of features of negotiation are more available in lockstep instruction than in small group work; however, they argue that the modified teacher talk is not necessarily relevant to each student.

Tasks

The tasks in the language classroom are divided into two types: one-way tasks and two-way tasks. A one-way task is an interaction in which the flow of information is one way - from only speaker to hearer. A two-way task is an interaction which involves exchanges of information among the participants. According to Long and Porter (1985), Long reports that two-way tasks produce more negotiation work than one-way tasks. However, Gass and Varonis (1985) find no significant difference between one-way tasks and two-way tasks. In one-way tasks the hearer is

obliged to get information from the speaker. In two-way tasks each has information that the other needs. Gass and Varonis (1985) argue that the conversationalists in the two-way task situations do not always negotiate because they can choose to change the course of the conversation when they do not comprehend the partner's utterances. When both are required to get information from one another in two-way tasks more negotiations occur in two-way tasks than in one-way tasks (Doughty and Pica 1984, reported in Long and Porter 1985). Although Long and Porter (1985) assert that two-way tasks are superior to one-way tasks in regards to the frequency of negotiations, the differences are sometimes due to other variables. As Gass and Varonis (1985) state, the complicated nature of tasks affect the success of task performance. Further, Gass and Varonis (1985) assert that the frequency of negotiations decreases when the learners become familiar with the tasks.

Discussion

The findings of these recent studies presented above must be considered cautiously because the number of studies is still small. Nontheless, we cannot ignore the results that appear to favor small group activities. The results confirm that non-native speakers can get more opportunities to receive comprehensible input and comprehensible output through the work of negotiation in various tasks. Groups consisting of only non-native speakers do appear to stimulate language acquisition even without sustained help from native or fluent speakers.

The author has no intention of denouncing the value of native speakers as language teachers. L2 learners normally acquire language more efficiently when they interact with native speakers. However, in EFL situations, to have a native speaker in all the classrooms is almost impossible. Therefore, in the EFL situations the use of small group work may provide more help than in the ESL situations. Finally, in most EFL situations the students are assigned to class by age rather than by level of proficiency. The diversity of the ability to use the target language can be a positive factor to promote negotiations among the students. However, since most EFL classes consist of speakers of the same first language, EFL students negotiate less frequently than ESL students because they can resort to their native language and also because they understand each other's accents, opinions, and cultures. Even so, as Varonis and Gass (1985a) suggest, the L2 learners of the same L1 background also need to negotiate frequently because the target language is foreign to them.

Variables Affecting the Performance of Small Group Work

So far this paper has argued for the effectiveness of small group activities by means of presenting L2 acquisition theories and evidence collected by the studies of the L2 interactions in the classroom. What we have to do next is to examine various factors which contribute to the successful performance of small

group work. As Copeland (1984) indicates, any kind of unplanned group experience can result in disaster. Among many variables the following are discussed: 1) the role of the teacher, 2) the role of the leaders, 3) the formation of groups, and 4)the sex composition of groups.

The Role of Teacher

The success of small group interactions, as Rivers (1983) suggests, depends upon the interrelationships among the learners and between the learners and the teacher because the teacher neither occupies a central role at the front of the classroom nor dominates the production of the target language (Long 1977). Experts agree that the teacher in the communicative classroom should serve as a learning consultant and as a resource person for information and language (Littlewood 1981; Littlejohn 1983). However, exactly how L2 should behave in small group situations is still being debated.

Kuriloff et al (1984) analyze teacher interventions in two small groups and examine their effects on group members' learning. Although the subjects of their study are not L2 learners but American graduate students in counseling psychology, the results tell us a great deal about the nature of teaching and learning in small groups. According to Kuriloff et al, the students valued interventions most when they were told how to use the unconscious and were provided with concepts such as norms which are aimed at promoting the level of discussions of a group event. The students, however, devalued irony and prodding made

by the teacher while they favor the teacher's positive emotional reaction to a group member and a group event.

The Role of the Leaders

For small group work to proceed smoothly we need to take account of the role of a designated leader. Long (1977) implies that leaderless communication networks are inclined to distribute unequal language practice among group members. Copeland (1984) says that the responsibility of the leader in adolescent groups is to skillfully control irrelevant speech and keep the group focused on the tasks such as problem-solving. In the traditional classroom it is a teacher who controls the students' responses. Yet we confirm that the desirable role of the teacher in a group situation is to act as a helper not but as a controller. Without question, a teacher should control many small group activities in a large class. Therefore, we may say that the success of group performance is determined largely by the leadership structure of the group as set up by the teacher.

The question we confront here is what kind of person can function as a good leader in the L2 classroom. Research on this issue appears to be lacking in the current ESL/EFL literature. Perspectives from sociology or social psychology specializing on group behavior can help us understand the leadership structure of the group.

According to Bales and Slater (1955, cited in Rees and Segal 1984), the leader in a group situation can be classified as of two types: an instrumental leader who keeps the group on task and

an expressive leader who relieves group tension and provides support in order to carry out the task. The former seems to be responsible for task achievement and the latter for group maintenance. Bales and Slater insist that the instrumental leader is not the same person as the expressive leader. Lewis (1972), however, argues that the role of instrumental and expressive leader can be possessed by the same person. A person who serves not only as an instrumental leader but also as an expressive leader is what Borgatta et al (1954) call a "great man". Borgatta et al (1954) suggest that groups led by the great men have higher productivity and lower tension levels than groups that do not contain great men. The great man theory of leadership suggests that the level of task performance increases when there is a high degree of leadership role integration.

In the ESL/EFL situations, the instrumental leader may be a talented, skillful language producer; the expressive leader may be a friendly conversationalist. The best leader is the one who possesses the two characteristics. Currently it is impossible to confirm how many "great men" are available in L2 classrooms.

The possible leader-type students in the L2 classroom may be what Faltis (1986) calls "sway" students. Sway students are defined as the L2 students who can not only display linguistic knowledge but also know when and how to interact appropriately with the teacher. According to Faltis' observastion, six sway students in a teacher-centered classroom consisting of twenty-four students engaged in nearly forty percent of the teacher-initiated interaction and almost half of the student-initiated

interaction. Faltis says that the sway students seem not only to contribute to the procedure of the class but also to serve as comprehensible input to non-sway students. The results of Faltis' study may indicate that the sway students will serve as a leader in small group work. Rees and Segal (1984) report a fairly high degree of leadership role integration on American college football teams. Further, they find that the leaders receive greater degrees of interpersonal attraction from group members than do non-leaders.

The Formation of Groups

The teacher may assign students to groups in accordance with their ability, achievement, interest, seating arrangements or randomly. The notion of the best formation of groups is perhaps influenced by several factors: the size of the whole class, the composition of the students, the aims of the tasks and materials covered, and so on.

To determine exactly the size of the group is almost impossible because the success of the group performance depends both on the size and the objective. As Long (1977) says, the groups in one class do not always have to be of equal size. Shaw (1964:129) cited Walker's study concerning the effect of group size. The results showed that as group size increased: 1. group efficiency decreased; 2. group morale decreased; 3. the number of messages conveyed increased; and 4. the unanimous selection of a leader decreased. The results suggest that size decreases the efficiency and task maintenance although the overall inputs and

outputs are more available. What the L2 teacher should pay attention to is the fact that the quantity of practice per student tends to rise as the group size decreases (Long 1977). One experienced L2 teacher suggests that the desirable number of students be four in small group discussions (Kitao 1986, Personal communication).

According to Shaw (1964), the communication networks among the group members can be divided into two types: centralized networks and decentralized networks. Figure 1 shows communication networks studied experimentally by social psychologists.

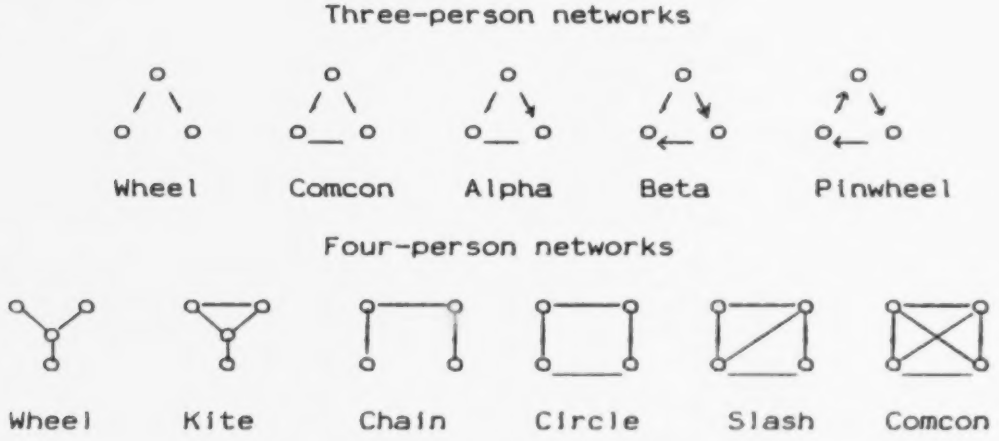

Figure 1

COMMUNICATION NETWORKS

Dots represent positions, lines represent communication channels, and arrows indicate one-way channels. (Shaw 1964, pp. 113)

Shaw (1964) reports that one of the major variables which affects the communication networks is the kind of task which the group must carry out. He suggests that centralized networks such as the wheel, chain are more oriented to the task which requires simply the collection of information in one place, and that decentralized networks such as the comcon, circle are more effective when the task, in addition to the information collection process, involves negotiations in order to perform the task. Further, he insists that decentralized communication networks are more satisfying to group members regardless of the kind of task.

The Sex Composition of Groups

Aries (1976) studied the effects of a group's sex composition on the interaction styles of the participants. The subjects are American undergraduate students. The interactional pattern and discussion content are examined in three kinds of group situations: two all-male groups, two all-female groups, and two mixed groups. The results of the study show different characteristics for men and women in single-sex and mixed groups. In mixed groups men address individuals more often, talk more about themselves and their feelings while in all-male groups they avoid the closeness and are more concerned with the expression of competition and status. Women in all-female groups share a great deal with each other; however, in mixed groups they avoid contact with other women and allow men to dominate the conversation.

Gass and Varonis (1985) observe the sex differences in the interactions among the L2 learners from various first language backgrounds: four Spanish speakers, two Arabic speakers, two Japanese speakers and one Korean speaker. Gass and Varonis report that men tend to give a signal to uncomprehended input more often than women. This suggests that women tend to refrain from indicating a lack of understanding.

Further, Gass and Varonis (in press) study the interactions among the L2 learners having the same background in terms of culture and language. Ten dyads examined are all Japanese speakers: four male/female dyads, three male/male dyads, and three female/female dyads. Their results are as follows: The frequency of the negotiations and the sudden topic changes are much higher in the mixed sex dyads than in the same sex dyads. In the mixed sex dyads the males tend to dominate the conversation in terms of the amount of talk, and they determine the course of the conversation by asking questions or changing the subject. The same-sex dyads show a greater sense of cooperation while the opposite-sex dyads show a greater sense of distance between participants.

The results shown above suggest that the mixed sex groups create more negotiations than the single-sex groups. It is curious to note that the dominance of men in the conversation is observed both in American groups and in Japanese pairs. As Gass and Varonis (in press) imply, men appear to have more opportunities to produce comprehensible output while women appear to have more opportunities to receive comprehensible input. One

of the major differences between American and Japanese interactional patterns is found in the men's attitudes toward men and women. This may be on account of cultural norms or due to the fact that American men are competitive with the other men while they show self-disclosure with women.

Suggestions for the Organization of the Small Groups

Before making suggestions, the L2 teacher should admit the fact that the language classroom is an artificial setting for language acquisition. In order to promote authentic communication in small group activities, the L2 teacher should carefully design the group work. When small group work is incorporated into the traditional lockstep classroom, the teacher's responsibility is to take account of variables that might affect the group performance. The review of research presented above provides the following insights into the successful use of small group work in the L2 classroom.

First, the teacher should behave like a generous consultant who is helping the students' activities to move in the right direction by providing relevant information and structure, if necessary. The teacher should also convey support, praise, and encouragement to group members but not become demanding.

Second, the necessity of group leadership must be recognized when the teacher forms the groups. A leader-type student should be assigned to each group if possible. Further, the teacher

should assist the leaders by promoting cooperative environments among the group members.

Third, the teacher should change the group size and internal communication networks within the group in accordance with the kinds of task assigned. In addition, the teacher should assign several kinds of tasks according to the nature of the materials covered because routine work may prevent active negotiations among the group members.

Finally, the teacher should take into consideration the advantages and disadvantages of different combinations of men and women in groups. For instance, at least in Japanese dyads, Gass and Varonis (in press) confirm that the single-sex dyads provide an opportunity to share information to a greater extent; the mixed sex dyads generate a greater amount of negotiation.

Needless to say, the teacher should control structures and vocabulary so that the group activities are a little beyond the student's present level of understanding. The teacher can use a great variety of techniques according to the student's proficiency and needs.

Summary

I. The use of small group work in the L2 classroom is supported by the following pedagogical arguments. Group work can: 1) produce more speaking opportunities; 2) improve the quality of student talk; 3) promote individually appropriate instruction; 4) lower filters which hinder language acquisition;

and 5) motivate learners. The effectiveness of small group work is also supported by L2 acquisition theories. The theories suggest that L2 acquisition is fostered by the comprehensible input and comprehensible output. Small group work can provide the students opportunities to receive comprehensible input and to produce comprehensible output through the work of negotiation in a non-threatening setting.

II. The research findings collected in this paper seem to support the above arguments. Further, they show the validity of small group work among non-native speakers.

1) Greater amount of student talk is found in small group work, and L2 learners appear to talk more frequently with other learners than with native speakers.

2) The accuracy of student talk does not appear to decrease in small group work.

3) A higher frequency of the other-corrections is observed in small group work, and L2 learners do not appear to miscorrect their partner's errors significantly often.

4) The higher frequency of negotiations is seen in non-native/non-native interactions rather than in native/non-native interactions.

5) The amount of negotiation appears to vary with the tasks that the students have to do and decrease as the learners become familiared with the tasks.

III. As a result of the examination of the variables which affect the successful group performance, the following are suggested for desirable operation of small group work:

1) The teacher should serve as a helper or a knower by providing the students with relevant information and structure in small group work.

2) The teacher should assign leader-type students to groups and assist them by promoting a friendly atomosphere.

3) The teacher should change the group size and communication structure according to the kind of task. The teacher should present a variety of tasks to prevent monotony.

4) The teacher should take account of the sex composition of groups so that each student can get a variety of different experiences.

There are few research findings on small group work in EFL classrooms. The author hopes that this paper will contribute to further research and further use of small group work.

REFERENCES

Aries, Elizabeth. 1976. "Interaction Patterns and Themes of Male, Female, and Mixed Groups." Small Group Behavior 7 (1): 7-18.

Borgatta, Edgar F., Robert F. Bales, and Arthur S. Couch. 1954. "Some Findings Relevant to the Great Man Theory of Leadership." American Sociological Review 19: 755-59.

Copeland, Jr., E. Thomas. 1984. "A Cognitive-Behaviorial Approach to the Group Treatment of Adolescents." Small Group Behavior 15 (3): 398-403.

Dunn, Rita. 1983. "Learning Style and Its Relation to Exceptionality at Both Ends of the Spectrum." Exceptional Children 49 (6): 496-506.

Faltis, Christian J. 1986. "Sway Students in the Foreign Language Classroom." Foreign Language Annals 19 (3): 195-202.

Gass, Susan and Evangeline M. Varonis. 1985. "Task Variation and Nonnative/Nonnative Negotiation of Meaning." Input in Second Language Acquisition. Ed. Susan Gass and Carolyn Madden. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House. 149-61.

---. In press. "Sex Differences in NNS/NNS Interactions." Conversation in Second Language Acquisition. Ed. D. Day. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.

Krashen, Stephen D. 1982. Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Kuriloff, Peter J., Elisa Y. Babad, Marsha Samuels-Singer, and Katherine Sutton-Smith. 1984. "Teaching and Learning in Small Groups: An Analysis of Trainer Interventions." Small Group Behavior 15 (2): 187-203.

Lewis, Gordon H. 1972. "Role Differentiation." American Sociological Review 37: 424-34.

Littlejohn, Andrew P. 1983. "Increasing Learner Involvement in Course Management." TESOL Quarterly 17 (4): 595-608.

Littlewood, William. 1981. Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Long, Michael H. 1975. "Group Work and Communicative Competence in the ESOL Classroom." On TESOL '75. Ed. Marina K. Burt and Heidi C. Dulay. Washington, D. C.: TESOL. 211-23.

---. 1977. "Group Work in the Teaching and Learning of English as a Foreign Language - Problems and Potential." English Language Teaching Journal 31 (4): 285-92.

---. 1983. "Native Speaker/Non-native Speaker Conversation in the Second Language Classroom." In On TESOL '82. Ed. Mark A. Clarke and Jean Handscombe. Washington, D.C.: TESOL. 207-25.

Long, Michael H., Leslie Adams, Marilyn McLean, and Fernando CastaÑos. 1976. "Doing Things with Words - Verbal Interaction in Lockstep and Small Group Classroom Situations." On TESOL '76. Ed. John F. Fanselow and Ruth H. Crymes. Washington, D. C.: TESOL. 137-53.

Long, Michael H. and Patricia A. Porter. 1985. "Group Work, Interlanguage Talk, and Second Language Acquisition." TESOL Quarterly 19 (2): 207-28.

Pica, Teresa and Catherine Doughty. 1985. "Input and Interaction in the Communicative Language Classroom: A Comparison of Teacher-Fronted and Group Activities." Input and Second Language Acquisition. Ed. Susan Gass and Carolyn Madden. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House. 115-32.

Rees, C. Roger. and Mady W. Segal. 1984. "Role Differentiation in Groups: The Relationship between Instrumental and Expressive Leadership." Small Group Behavior 15 (1): 109-23.

Rivers, Wilga M. 1983. Communicating Naturally in a Second Language: Theory and Practice in Language Teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Saville-Troike, Muriel, Erica McClure, and Mary Fritz. 1984. "Communicative Tactics in Children's Second Language Acquisition." Universals of Second Language Acquisition. Ed. Fred R. Eckman, Lawrence H. Bell, and Diane Nelson. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House. 60-71.

Scarcella, Robin C. and Corrine Higa. 1981. "Input, Negotiation and Age Differences in Second Language Acquisition." Language Learning 31 (2): 409-37.

Seliger, Herbert W. 1977. "Does Practice Make Perfect?: A Study of Interaction Patterns and L2 Competence." Language Learning 27 (2): 263-78.

Shaw, Marvin E. 1964. "Communication Networks." Advances in Experimental Social Psychology. Ed. Leonard Berkowitz. New York: Academic Press. 111-47.

Stevick, Earl W. 1976. Memory, Meaning and Method. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.

Swain, Merrill. 1985. "Communicative Competence: Some Roles of Comprehensible Input and Comprehensible Output in Its Development." Input in Second Language Acquisition. Ed. Susan Gass and Carolyn Madden. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House. 235-53.

VanPatten, Bill. 1984. "Processing Strategies and Morpheme Acquisition." Universals of Second Language Acquisition. Ed. Fred R. Eckman, Lawrence H. Bell, and Diane Nelson. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House. 88-98.

Varonis, Evangeline M. and Susan Gass. 1985a. "Miscommunication in Native/Nonnative Conversation." Language in Society 14 (3) 327-43.

---. 1985b. "Non-Native/Non-Native Conversations: A Model for Negotiation of Meaning." Applied Linguistics 6 (1) 71-90.